

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01946 01 OF 02 070307Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SSM-03 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /105 W
-----028733 070422Z /63

R 061427Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7489
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1946

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PERP, LE, SY, IS, PLO
SUBJ: LEBANESE FRONT ATTENTISME

1. SUMMARY: PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER KARIM
PAKRADOUNI SAYS LEBANESE FRONT HAS DECIDED ON
PASSIVE STRATEGY FOR THE MOMENT AND WILL AWAIT
EVOLUTION OF LEBANESE MOSLEM POLITICAL WILLINGNESS TO
JOIN WITH THEM IN OPPOSING THE PALESTINIANS. PAKRADOUNI
IS PERSONALLY ALMOST CERTAIN THAT VIOLENCE WILL OCCUR
BETWEEN UNIFIL AND THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT, AS A
RESULT, UNIFIL WILL BEGIN TO COLLAPSE. LEBANESE GOVERN-
MENT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WILL NOT RISK SENDING LEBANESE
ARMY TO THE SOUTH, AND, EVEN IF IT DID, THE ARMY WOULD NOT
GO. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON PAKRADOUNI APRIL 5. HE WAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01946 01 OF 02 070307Z

BROADLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A SOLU-
TION IN THE SOUTH AND ALSO FOR PROGRESS ON LEBANON'S
DEEP-SEATED INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS. HE
THOUGHT THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR OF 1975-76 WOULD NOW
RESUME, ALTHOUGH GENERALLY IN A NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL
"WAR OF ATTRITION."

3. LEBANESE FRONT PERSPECTIVE. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT, EARLY IN THE COURSE OF THE ISRAELI INVASION, BACHIR GEMAYEL HAD TRIED TO CONVINCE THE FRONT LEADERSHIP THAT THE LONG-AWAITED OPPORTUNITY FOR DECISIVE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS AND SYRIANS HAD ARRIVED. BACHIR HAD PREDICTED THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD CARRY THEIR INVASION ALL THE WAY UP TO THE DAMASCUS ROAD, AND WOULD SUPPORT A LEBANESE FRONT MILITIA OFFENSIVE OPERATION IN THE AKKAR (NORTH OF TRIPOLI) AGAINST THE SYRIANS AS WELL. (FONMIN BOUTROS TOLD AMBASSADOR BACHIR HAD BEEN EXPECTING GREEN LIGHT FROM ISRAELIS.) THIS HAD NOT HAPPENED, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, BACHIR WAS VERY SHAPRLY DISCREDITED WITH THE FRONT SENIOR LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND HIS OWN FATHER PIERRE GEMAYEL. BACHIR HIMSELF HAD BEEN DISILLUSIONED WITH WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE HIS ISRAELI ALLIES AS THE RESULT OF THE WAY THEY CARRIED OUT THEIR INVASION, WHICH HAD NOT DESTROYED THE PLO AT ALL, BUT MERELY DRIVEN THE PALESTINIANS CLOSER TO BEIRUT. (COMMENT: BACHIR HIMSELF TOLD EMBOFF MUCH THE SAME THING A FEW DAYS EARLIER.)

4. THE LEBANESE FRONT LEADERSHIP, PAKRADOUNI SAID, (AND ALSO PRESIDENT SARKIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS) NOW BELIEVED THAT CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN LEBANON WAS IMPOSSIBLE IN THE ABSENCE OF

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01946 01 OF 02 070307Z

A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. THUS, BASIC LEBANESE POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND THE PROSPECT OF PROGRESS ON THE POLITICAL ISSUES WERE SET BACK TO WHERE THEY WERE ABOUT A YEAR AGO. INSTEAD, THE LEBANESE FRONT LEADERSHIP NOW SAW THAT ITS ONLY STRATEGY WAS TO SEEK TO PROMOTE AND WAIT FOR BROAD DISAFFECTION ON THE PART OF LEBANON' MOSLEMS FROM THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, LEADING EVENTUALLY TO THE POSSIBILITY OF COMBINED CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM ACTION AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS. IN A SENCE, THE POLITICAL DYNAMIC IN LEBANON HAD RETURNED TO CIVIL WAR DAYS: A STRUGGLE BETWEEN MARONITES AND PALESTINIANS, WITH THE MOSLEMS OF LEBANON CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.

5. PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES. PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT THE PLO LEADERSHIP SEEMED TO BE FULLY AWARE THAT THE LEBANESE FRONT WAS BEGINNING TO WORK SYSTEMATICALLY TOWARDS WINNING OVER THE MOSLEM LEADERSHIP, AND THAT THIS ITSELF CONSTITUTED A DANGER TO THE PALESTINIAN POSITION. ACCORDINGLY, THE PALESTINIANS WERE ALREADY REACTING. THEY HAD BEGUN AN INTENSIVE BRIBERY CAMPAIGN AMONG MOSLEM POLITICAL LEADERS, AND WOULD,

AS THE SITUATION REQUIRED, RESORT TO STRONGER
METHODS SUCH AS SELECTIVE ASSASSINATIONS.

6. THE SOUTH. PAKRADOUNI IS CERTAIN THAT THE
ISRAELIS WILL NOT REPEAT NOT WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH
LEBANON. THEIR BASIC CONDITION - PREVENTION OF A
PALESTINIAN RETURN TO THE SOUTH - COULD NOT BE MET.
NEITHER UNIFIL, NOR THE LEBANESE ARMY, NOR THE
SYRIAN ARMY, NOR ALL OF THEM WORKING TOGETHER, WOULD
PRODUCE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE ISRAELIS WOULD
WITHDRAW.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01946 02 OF 02 070406Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SSM-03 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /105 W
-----029627 070421Z /63

R 061427Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7490
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 1946

A. UNIFIL. A VIOLENT ENCOUNTER BETWEEN UNIFIL
CONTINGENTS AND ONE OR ANOTHER PALESTINIAN ELEMENT
WAS INEVITABLE. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MOST LIKELY AT
TYRE, WHERE BOTH FRENCH TROOPS AND PALESTINIAN
REJECTIONISTS ARE NOW PRESENT IN LARGE NUMBERS,
FACE TO FACE. AS SOON AS THE FIRST CASUALTIES
OCCURRED, UNIFIL CONTRIBUTING STATES WOULD BEGIN TO
RETHINK THEIR COMMITMENT, AND AS A RESULT A
SUFFICIENTLY LARGE UNIFIL WOULD NEVER COME INTO
EXISTENCE. ALTERNATIVELY, THE UN COMMAND WOULD TAKE
STEPS TO AVOID DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE

PALESTINIANS, WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD REGAIN CONSIDERABLE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHICH WOULD HAVE THE SAME EFFECT OF MAKING THE UN OPERATION A FAILURE IN ISRAELI EYES.

B. THE LEBANESE ARMY LEADERSHIP WAS SAYING IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01946 02 OF 02 070406Z

WILLING TO GO SOUTH, BUT THIS WAS A BLUFF: GENERAL KHOURY WAS SAYING IT BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE WAS FULLY AWARE THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS DID NOT WANT THE ARMY TO GO SOUTH. SARKIS AND BOUTROS WERE SIMPLY UNWILLING TO TAKE THE RISK OF A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PALESTINIANS. EVEN IF SARKIS WERE TO GIVE THE ORDER, HOWEVER, THE LEBANESE ARMY WOULD NOT GO IN AN EFFECTIVE FASHION. ALREADY, KHOURY WAS ESTABLISHING VARIOUS CONDITIONS, AND HE WOULD FIND MORE CONDITIONS WHICH HAD TO BE MET. IF, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE ARMY ACTUALLY DID MOVE SOUTH, IT WOULD PROBABLY BEGIN TO DISINTEGRATE AS SOON AS IT GOT THERE.

C. FINALLY, SYRIA WOULD NOT ACT TO PREVENT A PALESTINIAN RETURN TO THE SOUTH. THE SOVIETS HAD TAKEN A HARD LINE IN SUPPORT OF THE PLO'S CLAIM TO ITS RIGHT TO RETURN SOUTH, AND THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT TAKE A DIFFERENT VIEW, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT PAKRADOUNI CALLED "ENORMOUS" NEW SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES TO SYRIA.

7. TOKEN MOVES TO THE SOUTH. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT WAS BENDING TO FOREIGN PRESSURE TO SHOW SOME INTENT OF MOVING SOUTH. PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT, PAKRADOUNI SAID THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK HAD RESULTED IN THE PRESIDENT CALLING IN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES COMMANDER COLONEL AHMED AL-HAJJ ON APRIL 3. HAJJ WAS TOLD TO TAKE THE RISKS TO ESTABLISH SMALL CONTINGENTS OF LEBANESE POLICE, PARTICULARLY AT TYRE. THE RATIONALE FOR SENDING POLICE RATHER THAN THE ARMY WAS BOUTROS' DOING: CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01946 02 OF 02 070406Z

POLICE UNITS WERE NOT EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT MILITARY OPERATIONS, THAT IS, TO FIGHT THE PALESTINIANS. THEREFORE, NOTHING WOULD BE LOST IN TERMS OF FACE

WHEN THEY IN FACT DID NOT DO SO. THE ARMY, HOWEVER, WOULD LIE FACE WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE SITUATION.

8. IN SUM, PAKRADOUNI BELIEVED THAT NEITHER THE LEBANESE ARMY NOR UNIFIL, NOR THE SYRIANS WERE GOING TO DO WHAT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON POSSIBLE. THE SYRIANS, TO BE SURE, MIGHT INDEED BE WILLING TO MOVE THEIR FORCES DOWN TO THE LITANI, BUT WERE ABSOLUTELY UNWILLING TO DO THIS AS LONG AS THE ISRAELIS WERE ANYWHERE IN SOUTH LEBANON. THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO JEOPARDIZE THEIR PUBLIC STANCE OF SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

9. COMMENT: PAKRADOUNI WAS MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN ON ANY PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER IN THE PRECEEDING SIXTEEN MONTHS. HE HAS NO IDEA WHAT THE UPSHOT WILL BE IN SOUTH LEBANON, EXCEPT THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL STAY. THE WEAKNESS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE BEEN MADE MANIFEST, AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR WILL RESUME, ALTHOUGH IN A LESS VIOLENT FORM (AT LEAST AS LONG AS THE SYRIAN ARMY REMAINED IN LEBANON.)

PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PALESTINIANS, MILITARY PLANS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT01946
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780150-0047
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780487/aaaacvzl.tel
Line Count: 248
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0a9f5cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3059802
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE FRONT ATTENTISME
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE, SY, IS, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0a9f5cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014